

“Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.”)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now I want to address two more issues related to this topic.

First, are the reports that the President is planning to create a panel of cherry-picked scientists who question the severity of climate change to “counter” the scientific consensus. I mentioned these reports earlier this week, but I want to update my friends in this Chamber that Democrats are in the process of preparing legislation that would defund this fake climate panel. We hope this legislation, like our resolution, will eventually be bipartisan because it shouldn’t be partisan to oppose a group of handpicked climate deniers spreading the fossil fuel industry’s propaganda under the imprimatur of the White House. It shouldn’t be partisan to oppose the administration’s setting up its own Orwellian Ministry of Truth on climate change.

So I urge my friends on the other side of the aisle who believe in climate science to sign on to our legislation once we have it ready.

NOMINATION OF ANDREW WHEELER

Mr. President, second is the nomination of Andrew Wheeler to be the next Administrator of the EPA—a question currently before the Senate. I opposed Mr. Wheeler’s nomination to be the Deputy Administrator, and I will oppose his nomination to be Administrator as well.

I opposed Mr. Wheeler initially because I thought his career as a lobbyist working on behalf of big polluters and climate deniers was exactly the wrong kind of experience for a job at the EPA, the Environmental Protection Agency. He spent most of his career lobbying against the same environmental protections he now oversees, and his time at the EPA has done little to assuage my original concerns.

Mr. Wheeler has failed to take meaningful action on toxic chemicals, including the chemical PFAS, which has plagued my home State. He has downplayed the severity of climate change and undermined several EPA programs that seek to address it, including the regulation of poisonous mercury from powerplants, efforts to reduce carbon emissions from cars and trucks, as well as replacing the Clean Power Plan.

At a time when climate change is the No. 1 threat facing our planet, installing a man such as Mr. Wheeler as permanent Administrator of the EPA—the Environmental Protection Agency—is the wrong thing to do.

So as I said earlier this morning, Leader McConnell’s move to bring the Green New Deal forward is nothing more than a stunt, but one of the great and positive ironies is that, finally, folks are talking about climate change again, more than at any time I can think of under this Republican majority.

If and when Leader McConnell brings his version of the Green New Deal forward for a vote, we will demand that Republicans first answer the core questions on climate change.

Again, three simple things: Do you believe climate change is real and happening? Do you believe human activity contributes to it? Do you believe Congress must act to address this pressing challenge?

If Leader McConnell and my Republican friends can’t answer those three questions—run away from them—the American people will see right through the ploy. The American people will see that Leader McConnell and his party stand against science and against facts, ostriches with their heads buried in the sand as the tide swiftly comes in.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, our Democratic leader has set three plain and very obvious questions about fossil fuel-burning carbon emissions and climate change that should be easily answered by every single Member of the Senate, and the fact that this is a problem is a clear indication of fossil fuel influence in this body—the regrettable extent of fossil fuel influence in this body.

It was not always this way. Here is a letter that a number of us came to the floor to talk about yesterday. The letter was written December 23, 1986. There had been hearings on climate change in the Environment and Public Works Committee, and a bipartisan group of Senators wanted some answers. They wrote this letter to what then existed, an Office of Technology Assessment for the Congress, inquiring about how serious they felt this was and what could be done about it, signed by Senator Stafford, Senator Chafee, Senator Durenberger, and three Democrats in 1986. I do not believe that a Republican Senator could be found to sign this letter today.

I got here in 2007, and for that year, and in 2008 and 2009, we had multiple bipartisan climate bills being discussed in this body. Over and over again, there were a Democrat and Republican who got together and worked to try to solve the climate problem—more than a decade ago. We have seen bipartisanship on this issue.

We have even seen, in 2009, this New York Times full-page advertisement signed by Donald J. Trump, which said that the science of climate change is “scientifically irrefutable.” Those were his words, not mine, in 2009, which said that if we don’t act there would be “catastrophic and irreversible consequences for humanity and our planet”—his words, not mine. That was 1986, that was 2007, and this was 2009.

Then something happened. Citizens United got decided by the Supreme Court or, to be fair to the Supreme Court, Citizens United got decided by five Republican appointees on the Supreme Court.

In my view, the fossil fuel industry asked for that decision, predicted that decision, and they were off like a sprinter at the gun when they got that decision. From that moment, all of that bipartisan activity on climate change here in the Senate ended, and it ended because the fossil fuel industry was allowed to spend unlimited money in politics. They found out how to spend unlimited dark money in politics. It is politically obvious that if one can spend unlimited money in politics, one can also threaten to spend unlimited money in politics. So between the unlimited spending and the unlimited, anonymous dark money spending and whatever they did in the way of threats and promises, it has been like a heart attack—flatlined—here in the Senate, since that moment. It is a tragedy.

In fact, if you go back to this letter for a minute, there were six signatories. We couldn’t get six States to come to the floor yesterday because one of these States has two Republican Senators, and we couldn’t get either of them to come to the floor.

I don’t know what has happened to the Republican Party that they can’t take this seriously even now—even as States like Florida are flooding on sunny days, even as States see wildfires they have never seen before, even as farmers are recording drought and flood conditions that are unprecedented, even as my State looks forward to 5 or 6 feet of sea level rise.

And then we got a clue as to what goes on here. This is a letter that was written on behalf of Andrew Wheeler, who is the slightly cleaned-up version of Scott Pruitt and who is pending before us to lead the Environmental Protection Agency. It ought to tell us a lot that the Republicans put up a coal lobbyist to represent the people of America leading the Environmental Protection Agency.

What tells you a lot also is this letter of support for this guy. Who is on it? These are these phony-baloney front group organizations funded by the fossil fuel industry that got together to write this letter:

The Heartland Institute. Koch-affiliated groups gave it \$7.18 million, and \$730,000 came from Exxon. Heartland is such a slippery, slimy group that they compared climate scientists to the Unabomber. That is the company that they travel in.

The Cornwall Alliance. Secret funding—we don’t know, but they are always in this climate-denier fringe crowd. The founder doesn’t believe in evolution. He said that tornadoes are a punishment from God, and that AIDS is punishment for being gay. You are running in great company with them, guys.

FreedomWorks is next. They received \$2.5 million from Koch-affiliated groups, and at least \$130,000 from the American Petroleum Institute.

The Competitive Enterprise Institute is next, with at least \$2 million given from Exxon, and Koch-affiliated groups gave at least \$5.2 million.

Americans for Prosperity. This is basically the hit squad for the Kochs in politics. It is one of the largest dark-money election spenders, spending more than \$70 million since Citizens United on Federal elections. They received a minimum of \$12 million, that we know of, in funding from the Kochs and more than \$23 million from the Koch-linked Donors Trust. Donors Trust, by the way, is a big enterprise whose sole purpose is to launder away the identity of big donors so that their money can flow without people knowing who is behind it.

Americans for Limited Government received at least \$5.6 million from Koch-affiliated groups.

Freedom Partners is described as “the Koch brothers’ secret bank.” It has spent more than \$55 million in dark money on Federal elections since Citizens United and received at least \$3 million from the Kochs, but, as usual, its funders are shrouded in secrecy.

Americans for Tax Reform. The American Petroleum Institute gave at least \$525,000, and Koch-affiliated groups gave at least \$330,000.

The Energy and Environmental Legal Institute received at least half a million dollars from Koch-affiliated groups.

CFACT received at least \$580,000 in funding from Exxon and more than \$8 million from Koch-linked groups.

Then, at the bottom is this little Caesar Rodney Institute, which is part of the larger State Policy Network, funded by the Kochs to spread their propaganda and poison into State legislatures.

This crew of fossil-fuel-funded, climate-denying front groups have received a minimum of more than \$63 million from the fossil fuel industry, and this is why we have Andrew Wheeler, a coal lobbyist, lined up to run our environmental agency in this country. I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I rise today to state the obvious—to state in clear terms what scientists have been warning us about for decades. The scientific data couldn’t be any clearer. Climate change is real. Climate change is here, and we are causing its devastating impacts and disruptions. Unless we start to implement policies to curb our carbon emissions and to mitigate its impacts, climate change will continue to wreak havoc upon communities across the Nation and around the world.

These are facts. These facts present us with the greatest and most existential global challenge humanity has literally ever faced. There are not two sides to these facts. The Earth’s five warmest years on record happened since 2014. It is not a coincidence. It is not an unexplained phenomenon. It is the direct result of both our actions and our inactions. Only the willfully ignorant refuse to acknowledge these facts and the gravity and urgency of

what we face because of the fact of human-caused climate change.

Unfortunately, the current occupant of the White House and too many here in Washington can be counted in that camp. President Trump’s decision to upend the Clean Power Plan and pull us out of the Paris climate accord was perhaps the most consequential representation of his inward-looking, isolationist view for America. It was a dangerous abdication of our Nation’s leadership role on the international stage, and if we choose to accept his failure to lead here in Congress, we will continue down a path toward a very real and very costly climate disruption.

In the coming weeks, Majority Leader MCCONNELL says he plans to call a vote here on the Senate on the Green New Deal resolution. I wish this were a genuine effort to address our climate challenges. Clearly, it is not. It is a political stunt by the majority leader to divide those who actually want to rise to the occasion and who actually want to address this crisis, rather than offer up any substantive solutions of his own.

The majority leader would have you believe that solutions to climate change are too costly or they are just too impractical to be taken seriously. I don’t know about you, but to me, it is that view that is wildly out of touch and, frankly, dangerous.

President Trump and Republicans love to talk about the cost of climate action. What we should be focusing on is the much steeper cost of inaction and the economic benefits of America’s leading the clean energy transition.

As an engineer, I am certain that our capacity to confront the challenges that we face, large and small, rests heavily on our ability to make policy that is actually driven by facts, by data, and by the best available science.

The latest data on climate change should be deeply alarming to all of us. Last fall, the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a report based on the research of thousands of our planet’s leading climate scientists. It laid out in stark terms how critical it is for us to find a way to limit the planet’s warming. Unless we can reduce global carbon emissions by 45 percent by 2030 and reach net-zero emissions by 2050, it will be nearly impossible to keep global temperatures below a rise of 3 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the century.

I know that is a lot of numbers, but what those numbers mean in terms of real ecological, economic, and humanitarian costs is incredibly important. Global average temperatures have already risen by nearly 2 degrees Fahrenheit, and that change is wreaking havoc on communities around the world.

One month after the U.N. released its landmark report, 13 Federal Agencies finalized the “Fourth National Climate Assessment,” a report mandated by Congress to study the evidence and the

impacts of current climate change. That report provided clear, indisputable evidence that the destructive wildfires, the catastrophic hurricanes, and the extreme flooding that we have seen in just the last couple of years is directly linked to human-caused climate change. These disasters are costing us billions of dollars each and every year.

The Pentagon has correctly called climate change a threat multiplier, meaning that climate impacts will amplify the existing threats to our national security. These are massive problems today—right now—not in some far off future. We need to recognize what the science is telling us. We need to recognize that the impacts and the disasters that we have seen so far are just the beginning.

Things are only going to get more chaotic, more unpredictable, and more expensive unless we change our trajectory. That is going to require global cooperation. It is going to require scientific ingenuity, and serious, sober policymaking based on the facts in front of us to put us on a better path.

I am proud that a number of my colleagues are stepping up to think through what those actions, what those solutions, and what those policies should be. We can have a healthy debate about the best ways to achieve these reductions in our emissions, but we can’t credibly dispute the science, what it is telling us, and the urgency of the need to act. These are facts. It is chemistry. Yet, instead of allowing us to productively debate those solutions, Majority Leader MCCONNELL is planning to waste our time on a political stunt.

Since Republicans took control of the Senate, they have not brought a single bill to the floor that would address emissions—not a single one—and they have taken many actions that have actually made the situation worse. This is not the serious legislating that we were sent here to do. This is not problem-solving.

The Senate is supposed to be the world’s greatest deliberative body. We are supposed to come together here on the Senate floor and in our committees and think through the greatest issues and challenges of our time. We are supposed to propose and debate policies to meet those challenges. I would welcome a long overdue debate on what policies would most efficiently and most effectively address our challenges.

I know that climate change often feels too big and too hard to fix, but, frankly, we all need to get out of that mindset because climate change is a problem we can solve. In fact, climate change is a problem that we must solve.

The good news is that we already have the technologies and the people to do it. Clean energy technologies have been evolving rapidly in recent years, and many of the clean energy technologies that seemed absolutely unrealistic only a decade ago have become

the new normal. I see a future where my two boys will use a reliable, cheap, resilient electrical grid that is 100-percent powered by clean energy because of the technologies invented in this country and because of the technologies built and installed with American labor. We need to invest in actually deploying these technologies with the urgency necessary to make real progress. This should be a bipartisan priority, not only for its impact on curbing carbon emissions but because it will create millions of jobs in communities across this country.

Some States are already moving in this direction. In my home State, new wind farms and new solar generation are bringing in billions of dollars of private investment. They are creating thousands of new jobs. Without aggressive, forward-looking national policies, we will not move fast enough. The scale of this transformation will be gigantic. There is no doubt about that. But this great Nation is up to the challenge.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I thank the gentleman from New Mexico for his comments. I couldn't agree more wholeheartedly with the sentiments that the gentleman from New Mexico just uttered and the others, the Senator from Rhode Island and the Senator from New York.

This is an emergency situation for the planet. How do we know? We know because the U.N. scientists at the end of 2018 issued a report saying that climate change is an existential threat to our planet. Our own U.S. scientists in the end of 2018 issued their own report. This is the Trump administration's scientists, much to his chagrin, who said: "We must act to avoid substantial damages to the U.S. economy, environment, and human health and the well-being over the coming decades."

These are earth-shattering science reports about the state of our planet. These are doomsday reports, which the scientists of our own country and the world are giving to us. Yet just 3 weeks ago, the "Denier in Chief" stood before the Congress and delivered a message to the American people—not by his words but by the words he did not utter, because in an hour and 20 minutes, President Trump did not even mention the words "climate change." He did not even mention the words "clean energy revolution."

President Trump, further, has sent to us a new person to be the head of the Environmental Protection Agency. Who is Andrew Wheeler? He is a former lobbyist for the coal industry. That is what this Senate will be voting on—a coal lobbyist to take over the environment of our country, as the scientists of our country tell us that we are facing an existential threat if we do not take urgent actions today.

Our majority leader yesterday called the Green New Deal "foolish and dan-

gerous." Well, with all due respect to my Republican colleagues, the only thing foolish and dangerous about the Green New Deal is to ignore the \$400 billion in damages over the last 2 years from supercharged storms and wildfires, to ignore the tens of trillions of dollars in the damage that we will see from climate change in the United States by 2100 if we do not act, and the hundreds of trillions of damage across the entire planet if we are not the leader in creating a clean-energy revolution.

What is dangerous, I say to the leader, is sending our men and women in the military overseas to protect tankers of oil that are coming into our country from the Middle East. Superstorms, wildfires, rising seas, and other extreme weather events are the impacts of climate change if we do not act boldly to stop it. It isn't just dangerous; it is an existential threat to our planet, not from politicians or political scientists but from real scientists—"the" scientists—the Nobel Prize-winning scientists of the whole planet and in our own country. They are telling us we are in danger, and this body has to take positive action to deal with it.

We have a "Denier in Chief" in the White House. We have a Republican leader who has brought climate bills to the floor while he has been leader, but they have been bills to make the climate even more dangerous—the Keystone Pipeline bill and drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil. The Republicans are today going to confirm a coal lobbyist to head the Environmental Protection Agency, which is the Agency charged with protecting the planet.

The reality is that the Republicans have no plan to deal with the climate crisis. That is why they want to short circuit this debate on the Green New Deal. Let's have a hearing. Let's hear from experts. Let's hear from scientists. Let's have the evidence in the U.S. Senate. Then we can decide—but, no, there will be no debate in the Senate on science. There will be no debate on the harm that is going to be done if we do not act. Instead, in the same period, there will be just an attempt to confirm a coal lobbyist to take over the Environmental Protection Agency and to derail any real debate on the Green New Deal. That is who they are.

Why is that? It is that the Green New Deal is dangerous. It is dangerous for the status quo to just continue to remain in place on climate change. It is dangerous for the Koch brothers and those who are used to killing every climate debate before it gets a chance to start. It is dangerous for those who want us to limp into a frightening future with no plan and no protections in place. It is dangerous for those who benefit from the continued devaluation of our workers, from the historic oppression of vulnerable communities, and from the continued destruction of the environment. That is who would

think the Green New Deal is dangerous.

The Democrats want to support working families and support a safe climate future in which all communities are protected. We welcome debate on proposals for how to get there, but the science is clear on what we need to do and the magnitude of the response that we have to unleash in this country.

The Republicans may think the Green New Deal is just a resolution, but it is more than that. It is a revolution, and it cannot and will not be stopped. The science is driving this. It is an intergenerational concern that we are heading toward a catastrophe on this planet that could have been avoided, but we as a nation have stood on the sidelines and have allowed it to happen.

Ladies and gentlemen, this vote that we take as to whether Andrew Wheeler, a coal lobbyist, should be the head of the Environmental Protection Agency goes right through the heart of whether we are going to respond to the magnitude of this challenge. I do not know how anyone can vote for Andrew Wheeler given the science that has been presented to us, given the danger that we now know, given the catastrophe that is going to be created if we don't change course. This is just doubling down on a disaster. Andrew Wheeler is going to be the architect of the Republican plan to ensure that we do nothing about this climate catastrophe. The consequences could not be greater, but the political ramifications in the 2020 elections are going to be great as well. We will see a revolution that rises up across this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, Henry David Thoreau asked: What is the use of a home if you don't have a tolerable planet to put it on?

We are here at a unique moment in human history when the planet is threatened. It is not just our local stream that has been polluted by some factory. It is not a river that is so toxic that it catches on fire. It is not just a small section of my home State that has been afflicted by some new disease in the forests. It is our entire planet that is at risk. So any Member of this Chamber who is not coming forward to help figure out how to address that is guilty of vast malpractice, legislative malpractice, and moral malpractice and incompetence because that is what a legislature is about. When there are big problems that we face, we come together. We don't ignore them. We wrestle with the best way to take them on. That is what this conversation is about.

Senator CARPER's resolution says three things, the first of which is we have a real problem, and it is easy to demonstrate that. We can take a look at all of the information we have coming from every major scientific organization that tracks increasing heat on

the planet, but maybe that is a little too complicated. Let's just ask a simple question. What have been the hottest years in human history? When have they been? Were they in the 1700s, in the 1800s, in the 1900s? When were those 5 hottest years? They were the last 5 years—2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018. This is no coincidence because that would be an astronomically unlikely thing to occur. We have enough science to know why this is occurring, not just that it is occurring.

It is occurring because we are generating carbon dioxide, and we are generating methane. They trap heat. We have been told, for the better part of a century, that this was going to be a problem, and the problem has arrived. It is not some theory. It is not some computer model. It is not some ivory tower. The facts are clearly evident. They are evident in our forests with longer and hotter fire seasons. They are evident in more powerful hurricanes than we have seen before because they draw so much more energy from an overheated ocean. We see it in the spread of diseases, like Lyme disease with the spread of tick populations. We see it with changing species. We see it with glaciers. We see it with melting permafrost. We see it with rising sea levels. We see it everywhere unless you are blind to the facts. We are not here to be blind. We are here to act. So we know the problem is real. That is the first point.

The second point is we know what is causing it—human activities, our putting methane into the air and putting carbon dioxide into the air. Therefore, we know the third point, which is our responsibility to act.

So many of us have come forward and have said: Here is an idea. How about this? This will completely change the amount of carbon dioxide from the transportation sector. Here is an idea. This would really change the carbon dioxide generated by power generation, electricity generation. How about this? This would greatly reduce the carbon dioxide generated from heating buildings.

Yet, in that conversation, there is the sound of silence from the right side of the aisle. Do we hear multitudinous ideas? No. We hear none. That is where the legislative malfeasance and where the moral irresponsibility lies—in pretending that you can be a leader in this country, in this Senate Chamber, and not address this major challenge that is afflicting our planet. That is unacceptable. We don't need fake and phone debates on the floor of a resolution that hasn't gone through committee. We need real discussion and real engagement.

It was not that long ago that Republican leaders across this Nation were taking on this issue. H. W. Bush ran for the Presidency to take on climate change. When he got into office, he didn't end up doing a lot, but he ran on it and campaigned on it. Other leaders have said we have a responsibility to be

good stewards of our resources. I have heard that from the Republican side of the aisle for my entire lifetime—good stewardship. So why the silence now? Why the failure to look at the facts? Why the failure to bring forward ideas? This is not OK. We need real debate, real discussion.

I have put forward ideas I would love to see debated, one being that we need to dramatically reduce the fossil fuels, which we own as a public, coming out of the ground. We have to lead the world, and we can't ask the rest of the world not to extract and burn fossil fuels if we are still profiting from doing so.

I laid out the vision—the 100-percent mission in all sectors—and how we can get there over the coming decades. It is a 300-page bill that is full of ideas. Maybe they are not all the best of ideas, but I encourage my colleagues to read them, to find ones they like, and to bring forward their ideas. Where do tax credits play in this conversation? Where do limits play on pollution? Where do incentives to transition to renewable energy come in? Let's have that debate as serious policymakers and leaders of this country who are responsible for our Nation and for the future of our planet.

Henry David Thoreau lived a long time ago, but he laid out the point that we are responsible for the health of our planet. Let's take that responsibility seriously. Let's engage. Let's debate every single idea. There are hundreds of them out there. Let's go through them. Let's forge a bipartisan plan. Let's not let any industry in America contaminate the process, the political process, through these dark donations. Let's not, any party in this country, be misled from addressing the serious issues before us because they are blinded by the hundreds of millions of dollars falling on their campaigns. Let's do what we have to do, what we have a responsibility to do. History will judge whether we have done that which cannot be delayed. That is our responsibility.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, as of now, there are zero climate proposals coming from Senate Republicans—none. So it becomes extraordinarily difficult to debate climate change when only one political party is committed to fixing it. I can't underscore this enough. I don't know if I can sort of stage direct the C-SPAN cameras, but if I can—if they would pan out—they would see an empty Chamber on the other side.

Look, if you don't like our proposals—if you don't like the investment tax credit or the production tax credit, if you don't like planting trees, if you don't like fuel efficiency standards, if you don't like mercury and air quality standards, if you don't like investing in high-tech research to find that next breakthrough or if you think

climate change is a hoax, come down to the Senate floor and make your argument. Yet they are not even doing that. This is a planetary emergency—the most important moment in human history as it relates to the planet Earth—and the party in power is doing its best to make the problem worse.

Democrats want to invest in clean air, clean water, and smarter infrastructure. We have taken every chance we can to talk about climate and how to fix it. Senator WHITEHOUSE alone has given 200 speeches on the Senate floor about the climate crisis.

The Republican response has been to try to make this silly, to score points about something that was posted on a Congresswoman's website and promptly removed and to make false statements saying Democrats want to ban cheeseburgers or whatever. That is because they don't want to debate this issue seriously because they don't have ideas on climate. Their only plan is to actively, aggressively make things even worse.

They need to make this debate about something—anything—other than what it is, which is a planet in crisis; weather getting weirder and worse, wildfires, coastal flooding, fisheries crashing. Pennsylvania farmers say they had the worst season they have had in 30 years because of all the rain they got last year, while farmers in the Midwest didn't get near enough. It is a rolling disaster happening right now.

In response, here is what the Republicans have done. They have put people who make their money from pollution in charge of regulating pollution. They have given oil and gas companies access to millions of acres of land and water that are supposed to be protected for things like conservation, hunting, hiking. They pulled the United States out of the Paris Agreement, which means we are the only country on the planet not at the table when it comes to figuring out what to do about this problem.

They have made it easier for companies to put methane in the air or make cars that pump pollution into the air, and instead of just leaving coal companies alone, instead of saying, hey, let's let the market decide, they are actually looking to subsidize coal because now it is noncompetitive with wind and solar, in a lot of instances, but they actually want to subsidize coal so they can get another 10 or 20 years' worth of fossil fuel pollution. This is not what you would do if you were trying to stop climate change. This is what you do if you are trying to make it worse.

So let's take a closer look at some of the worst things on their list. First, you have to look at the people they have put in charge of conserving public lands and keeping air and water clean. This week, the Senate is voting on Andrew Wheeler to run the EPA. He is a coal lobbyist, and I know politicians are prone to sort of overstatement, rhetorical flourishes, but this guy is actually a coal lobbyist. He made his living working for coal.

I don't know him. I presume he is an honorable fellow, but now we are supposed to believe he is the best person to keep coal companies in line, to make sure they follow the rules and don't hurt the air people breathe or the rivers they fish in.

If this were a movie about corruption in politics, this script would be thrown out because it was too obvious.

Then there is Ryan Zinke, who was supposed to protect public lands but instead opened up oil and gas leases at the Department of Interior, or the guy regulating Federal energy who denies that climate change is real, even though we can all see it with our own eyes. If you don't believe the science, you can at least believe your own experience. The weather is getting worse and weirder and more severe. He says carbon dioxide really isn't a pollutant at all.

So the nominees have been awful, but the policy is bad too. Republicans are trying to pull us out of the Paris Agreement that every other country in the world is part of. We are not even trying to lead on this planetary emergency, and it means that we give the leadership mantle to China to take the lead on how the world is going to fix this problem or make it worse, as if Americans should trust China to do what is best for our country.

Then there is the Republican effort to let polluting companies keep polluting. The whole reason the EPA exists is to make sure the air we breathe, the water we drink and swim in, the land we farm on and live on doesn't get polluted, but Republicans have taken control of the EPA to get rid of these protections, and they are telling the auto industry they no longer need to make cars that put less pollution in the air. They have gutted the Clean Power Plan so carbon pollution could be 12 times worse in the next decade—12 times worse in the next decade.

Researchers have found it would be better if we had no policy at all than if we do the things the Republicans want to do.

They have let energy companies off the hook for leaking methane and made it easier for super pollutants to leak into the air. Again, this is the kind of thing you might hear from a politician who is a little overheated, a little overly angry, maybe taking a few liberties with the truth.

This is literally what is happening. They literally put a coal lobbyist in charge of the EPA. That should be enough for someone on the other side to say: Gosh. I can't vote for a coal lobbyist to run the EPA. Now, I don't agree with the Democrats about climate change, but I can't pretend this thing doesn't happen to my home State. I can't pretend Alaska isn't melting or the fisheries aren't crashing or our farms aren't having great difficulty or that the floods in South Carolina and North Carolina and Florida aren't real, and so we can't put a coal lobbyist in charge of the Environmental Protection Agency.

There was a time when the EPA and environmental protection itself was not a partisan issue. Here we are in the U.S. Senate—which is the place to solve these kinds of problems over the course of this country's great history—and every time we come to the floor to talk about climate change, it is an empty Chamber on the Republican side. We have to do better as a country. We have to do better as a Senate. We have to solve climate change together. Future generations are counting on us to transcend partisanship and to have this great debate.

If Leader MCCONNELL wants to bring a resolution, which he thinks is clever, to sort of divide Democrats, fine. We are not particularly worried about that. We are taking this opportunity to say: Great. Let's talk about climate change.

The first question to ask—the first question to ask—is, what is the Republican plan for climate change? Right now, the answer is very simple. They have no plan.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, today I am pleased to join with Senators SCHATZ, MERKLEY, MARKEY, and others who have spoken to highlight the need to act on climate change.

I said on the floor earlier this week that the Democrats may not yet agree on exactly how we must address climate change, but we all agree on at least three things: One, climate change is real; two, we as human beings are the primary cause of the climate crisis we face today, and it has been building for the last almost 100 years; and, three, the U.S. Congress—us, the House—should take immediate action to address the challenges of climate change.

That is why I am introducing a resolution today that says those three things: Climate change is real. Humans are leading to this crisis we face. We have an obligation in this body and the House to do something about it.

Democrats believe in our hearts and our minds that it is possible to have a healthy climate and a vibrant, growing economy, and anyone who says otherwise is preaching a false choice.

Sadly, with President Trump in the White House and this administration, many of our Republican friends across the aisle have chosen to ignore the clear science and threat that climate change poses to our children and to their children.

As we speak about climate change today, this Senate is considering the nomination of Andrew Wheeler to lead EPA. Under Mr. Wheeler's leadership, EPA is rolling back climate regulations that will lead to more carbon pollution in the air while increasing other air pollution that triggers asthma, lung disease, and, in some cases, death.

Mr. Wheeler claims these actions are needed to provide more business certainty. He believes industry is stuck in

on old world order. I would just say to Andrew Wheeler, as Bob Dylan once said, "the times they are a-changin'."

Things have changed a lot in the last 15 years. Industry knows where the future lies, and that future is in cleaner technologies. Companies are making investments now for the next 10 and 20 years down the road. They see where the global markets are going. They need to invest in clean energy or be left behind.

Yet, even when industries ask this administration to support climate policies that will help the bottom line of those businesses, in too many instances, Mr. Wheeler seems to turn a blind eye. In fact, there are policies that this administration could support today, right now; policies that would dramatically help our climate and our economy.

One of those policies is the ratification of something called the Kigali amendment to the Montreal Protocol. You say stuff like that, and my colleagues' eyes glaze over. So I want to take a minute to talk about what they mean.

The Montreal Protocol, ratified by the United States in 1988, is a global environmental agreement mainly focused on phasing down emissions that contributed to the hole in the ozone layer. It was not that long ago—about the time our pages here were born—that it was a burning issue.

Ozone-depleting substances such as chlorofluorocarbons—we call them CFCs for short—were often found in the coolants used to cool food in household refrigerators and the air-conditioners in our homes and in our cars. CFCs are also found in foams and solvents used in industrial processes.

If there was a poster child for a successful global agreement, I think the Montreal Protocol—which most people never heard of—has to be that poster child. This agreement has led to a 97-percent reduction in the global consumption of ozone-depleting substances with little, if any, economic disruption. Think about that.

Over the years, every administration since the Reagan administration has supported the Montreal Protocol and the four amendments associated with it.

However, it turns out a majority of the ozone-depleting substances are actually being replaced by something called HFCs, hydrofluorocarbons. Those HFCs are easy to use. They are efficient. They are safe for the ozone layer. That is good.

Unfortunately, there is a catch. The HFCs have a global warming potential that is thousands of times greater than carbon dioxide. On the one hand, they are good for the ozone layer; on the other hand, they are a killer when it comes to carbon dioxide. So some really smart people decided to see what they could do about this, and what those smart people did is they came up with a follow-on product to HFCs.

It is estimated that left unchecked, HFCs could account for approximately

20 percent of greenhouse gas pollution by 2050, and that ain't good. So by using HFCs, we are fixing one global environmental problem—the hole in the ozone—but we are contributing to another, and that is just as serious.

To address this negative side effect, on October 15, 2016, in a place called Kigali, which is in Rwanda—that is why they call it the Kigali amendment or Kigali treaty—more than 170 countries agreed to amend the Montreal Protocol, including ours.

The goal of this agreement is to achieve more than an 80-percent reduction in global HFC production and utilization by 2047. It doesn't say you have to stop using it tomorrow. This is a phaseout and a phasedown. If we don't do anything by 2047, we will see an increase of about half a degree Celsius—that is almost a full degree Fahrenheit—in global warming by the end of this century. We can't afford to do that. Our planet can't afford to do that. Our kids, our grandchildren cannot afford for us to do that.

U.S. industry strongly supports the Kigali amendment because U.S. companies have already invested billions of dollars in order to be able to produce the next-generation technologies that are going to replace, over time, HFCs. Phasing down HFCs allows U.S. companies to capture a large portion of a global market that is—listen to this—\$1 trillion in size, which will create 150,000 new direct and indirect American jobs in less than a decade.

These new jobs are expected to generate close to \$39 billion dollars—\$39 billion—in annual economic benefits for our country; again, in less than a decade.

Industry also believes ratification of the Kigali treaty will mitigate unfair Chinese dumping of HFCs in the United States, hurting our businesses.

Ratification of the Kigali amendment is a no-brainer, and even those who are skeptical about climate change ought to be able to admit that it would be great for U.S. competitiveness and good-paying American jobs.

This is a real win-win situation. If we don't seize the opportunity, we should have our heads examined. That is why we have some pretty strange bedfellows supporting the Kigali ratification.

There is a chart behind me. Among others, we have the National Association of Manufacturers, Natural Resources development folks, the spirit of enterprise, FreedomWorks, the American Chemistry Council, Business Roundtable, and Sierra Club.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. CARPER. They are not all wrong. They are right. I say to my colleagues across the aisle: Listen to these folks, and let's use our heads and our hearts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

SOCIALISM

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, as strange as it seems, socialism is having

a bit of a resurgence here in the Nation's Capital these days.

Why, you might ask, has this failed economic theory that is so destructive of individual freedom captured the attention of some of our friends in the Democratic Party? I admit, to me, it is somewhat of a mystery.

My guess is I am not the only one who assumed that every American has learned the lessons of history and that those lessons are common knowledge. Apparently not. One other possibility is that socialism is a stalking horse for other, less obvious goals. I will have more to say about what the Founders believed about the concentration of government power that would be needed to implement these utopian schemes at a later time. I also will return to the Senate floor at another time to talk about the well-funded efforts, including in the State of Texas, to advance the cause of socialism, unbeknownst to most of my fellow Texans.

Maybe self-identified socialists or democratic socialists—by the way, that is an impossible contradiction in terms. You can't be democratic and a socialist at the same time. Obviously, people put those two terms together to try to mask their true intentions.

Obviously, these self-identified democratic socialists have never learned what it is or what it stands for. Recent polling suggests that Americans have vastly different ideas about what socialism really means. A Gallup poll, for example, found that 23 percent of the people who responded understood that it means economic equality—though the definition of what equality looks like varies pretty significantly. About the same number of people said they didn't know or had no opinion of what socialism means. Roughly 17 percent understand it to mean government ownership or control of business and the economy.

There were a variety of answers, ranging from government-guaranteed benefits to communism, to people simply being social and getting along. That is what some people think socialism is. This confusion about what, exactly, socialism is has allowed its supporters to push this discredited idea back into the political mainstream.

The so-called democratic socialists are trying to convince the American people that bigger government and less liberty are the solutions to economic inequality. But they don't just want economic opportunity or equal opportunity; they want equal outcomes. They clearly want to put the government in charge of Americans' lives.

To be sure, they will not be honest about the means by which that equality would be accomplished under socialism. They use a lot of feel-good phrases to mask the consequences of their argument. They say things like “give a voice to the voiceless” or “to achieve a more just society.” What they don't tell you is that in order to redistribute economic benefits, you would have to marshal the power of the

government to coerce the American people to give up the fruits of their labor in pursuit of socialist, utopian aims.

While socialists will not tell you what the government would have to do to force that redistribution, they like to point to Scandinavian countries as a model for socialism's success. But there are some problems with that.

They will say: Look at Denmark. They have free higher education, universal healthcare, and subsidized childcare, and they are doing great. So, they say, socialism works. But facts are stubborn things. For one, Denmark is not a socialist country. Just ask the Danish Prime Minister, who said:

Denmark is far from a socialist planned economy. Denmark is a market economy.

The left argues: It is still a good model. We want that.

OK, so how are they paying for all of these programs? It is certainly not just from the top 1 percent of the wealthiest of Americans. It is the middle class too. Margaret Thatcher once said: “The problem with socialism is that you eventually run out of other people's money.”

Let's look at tax rates. Danes pay some of the highest taxes in the world. In the United States, tax revenue accounts for just over a quarter of the size of our economy. In Denmark, it is 50 percent—or double.

Let's also compare our two countries. The population of the country of Denmark is roughly 1/60th the population of the United States. In terms of landmass, it is about 16,000 square miles. Texas is almost 17 times the size of Denmark.

So if the model used in Denmark is, one, not socialism and, two, unaffordable, let's instead look for a better example of a country that has embraced socialism. I would suggest Venezuela would be a good candidate.

In the late 1990s, then-Presidential Candidate Hugo Chavez delivered impassioned speeches promising to lead Venezuela into a socialist paradise. He talked about the country's wealth being stolen by evil capitalists and greedy corporations and promised hope and change if he was elected. That sounds similar to some of the snake oil being sold by a number of radical Democrats today. By the way, you don't see caravans of people attempting to immigrate to socialist countries like Venezuela. It is just the opposite.

We now know that Chavez's promises were empty and dangerous, and while Venezuela certainly saw a lot of change, it wasn't the kind they wanted or the kind they expected. The government took over businesses; they shut down free markets; and they suppressed free speech. As a result, one of the richest countries in the world is now among the poorest. Basic commodities like food, medicine, and water are in short supply; freedom of the press has disappeared; crime rates have skyrocketed; and millions have fled.

Of course, it is no surprise that self-proclaimed socialists in the United